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## HIGHWAY FATALITIES ARE DOWN IN FLORIDA

*~ Preliminary figures show crash fatalities at an eight-year low ~*

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Florida ended 2008 with 2,986 traffic fatalities, the lowest the statistic has been in eight years according to preliminary data from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. The last time Florida's total number of fatalities was less than 3,000 was in 2000 when there were 2,999 fatalities. State traffic deaths in 2008 were down 235, a seven percent reduction, from 2007 when 3,221 people died and 325 fewer than the five-year average of 3,311 deaths. While the numbers of fatalities are similar for 2000 and 2008, the Sunshine State's population grew by more than 2.8 million, an increase of nearly 18 percent.

"While the number of fatalities has decreased, which is good news, even one death on our highways is still too many. We need to be vigilant about education and enforcement activities that help keep our highways safe," said DHSMV Executive Director Electra Theodorides-Bustle. "While the Department will continue to do everything we can to safeguard motorists, every driver has a responsibility to observe Florida's traffic laws and to exercise safe driving habits."

While the numbers are still preliminary, the final counts for 2008 will be made available later this year when the Department publishes its annual *Traffic Crash Statistics Report*. Reports from previous years are available online at [www.flhsmv.gov/html/safety.html](http://www.flhsmv.gov/html/safety.html).

"The Florida Highway Patrol is making every effort to keep residents and visitors safe through enforcement and by providing assistance to motorists. You can help by dialing \*FHP (\*347) to report drunk drivers, traffic crashes, stranded or disabled motorists or any suspicious incidents occurring on Florida's roadways," said FHP Director Colonel John Czernis. "Our troopers also participate in numerous events to educate the public on traffic laws and safety. Buckling up is one of the easiest, yet smartest choices you can make."

In an effort to reduce crashes, state troopers not only enforce the law, but also educate the public on safe driving habits. They talk to groups about traffic safety, conduct demonstrations using the rollover simulator and DUI goggles, show parents how to properly install car seats and more. In 2008, the Department launched education campaigns to include one that is a Web site by teens for teens ([www.TakeTheWheel.net](http://www.TakeTheWheel.net)) and another that reminds motorists to [\*Give Others a Break. Share the Road.\*](#)

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is charged with the mission of *providing highway safety and security through excellence in service, education and enforcement*. The Department is leading the way to a *Safer Florida* by way of three major components: driver licenses, vehicle tags and titles and the Florida Highway Patrol. To learn more about DHSMV and the services offered, visit [www.flhsmv.gov](http://www.flhsmv.gov).

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